BILL'S HOME TECH

Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

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One-Tap "Simple Mode" Home Screen for Seniors

Strip the phone down to big, clear buttons for the few things you actually use

Plain-English tech help from:

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Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

A phone can be stripped down to a calm home screen with a few big, labeled buttons for the things you actually use — phone, messages, camera, photos, and a favorite person or two. On Android, turn on the built-in Easy or Simple mode under Display (Samsung calls it Easy mode). On iPhone, hold the screen and drag unused apps off to a second page or the App Library (nothing is deleted), make the icons and text big, add a big clock-and-weather widget, and add one-tap buttons for the people you call most.

Quiet the notifications for games and shopping, and take a photo of the finished screen so it is easy to restore.

1 The Short Version

A phone does not have to look complicated. Both iPhones and Android phones can be arranged into a simple, calm home screen with large, clearly labeled buttons for the handful of things you actually do — phone, messages, camera, maybe the weather and a video-call app. Everything else can be tucked out of sight, not deleted, just out of the way.

You can do this in two ways: by rearranging the standard phone into something simpler, or by turning on a built-in "easy mode" that redesigns the whole screen with bigger buttons. This guide covers both, and nothing you do here is permanent.

- The phone can be stripped down to a few big, labeled buttons.
- Android has a built-in Easy or Simple mode that does most of the work for you.
- On an iPhone you build a clean screen and tuck the clutter away.
- Nothing gets deleted — it is all still there if you ever want it.

TIP

Decide first which apps you genuinely use — usually five or six: phone, messages, camera, photos, a weather app, perhaps a video-call or a news app. Everything beyond that handful is what makes a phone feel overwhelming, and it can all go on a second page.

2 Why a Simpler Phone Is a Better Phone

A cluttered phone is not a sign you are bad with technology; it is a sign the phone was sold to you full of things the maker and the store wanted on there. Fewer buttons means fewer ways to tap the wrong thing, fewer mysterious screens to escape from, and far less anxiety every time you pick it up.

People who simplify their phone almost always use it more, not less — because it stops being a source of worry and becomes a tool they trust. That is the whole goal here: a phone you reach for without bracing yourself, and one you can hand to a grandchild to add a photo without losing your place.

GOOD TO KNOW

Simplifying does not make the phone any less capable. The camera is still a great camera, the maps still work — you are just not forced to wade past them to reach the things you use every single day.

3 Android's Built-In Easy Mode

Most Android phones include a simple or easy mode that, in one setting, enlarges everything and lays out a clean home screen with big buttons. It is the fastest route to a simpler phone and it is completely reversible.

1. Open Settings.
2. Tap Display (or type "easy" into the search box at the top of Settings).

3. Look for Easy mode, Simple mode, or Easy view, and turn it on.
4. The home screen changes to larger icons, bigger text, and a simpler layout.
5. If you dislike it, the same switch turns it right back off — nothing is lost.

> **TIP**
>
> On Samsung phones it is called "Easy mode" under Display. It bumps up the font, simplifies the layout, and makes the keyboard bigger all at once — the single best starting point on a Samsung phone.

4 Build a Clean Home Screen on iPhone

The iPhone has no single "easy mode," but you can build a beautifully simple first screen by hand in a few minutes, keeping only the apps that matter and sending the rest out of sight where they cannot distract you.

1. Press and hold an empty part of the home screen until the icons jiggle.
2. Drag the apps you do not use off the first screen — slide them to a second page or into a folder.
3. Arrange your few essentials — Phone, Messages, Camera, Photos — in the top rows where they are easy to reach.
4. Tap Done (or press the side button) to finish.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> On an iPhone you can remove an app from the home screen without deleting it — choose "Remove from Home Screen," and it still lives in the App Library (swipe all the way to the left). The screen gets clean without you losing anything at all.

5 Make the Buttons Big and Labeled on iPhone

A simple screen is even better when the buttons are big. The iPhone lets you make the app icons larger and keep their names underneath, which is exactly what you want when a glance should be enough.

1. Press and hold an empty part of the home screen until the icons jiggle, then look for the icon-size or Edit option at the top.
2. Choose the larger app icons if your iPhone offers it.
3. Turn up the overall text size in Settings, Accessibility, Display & Text Size, so the labels under the icons are clear.
4. Keep one app per spot — resist cramming them into tiny folders that hide what is inside.

> **TIP**
>
> Fewer, bigger, clearly labeled buttons beat many small ones every time. A first screen with just six large buttons is far easier to use than thirty small ones, even if it means a second page for everything else.

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6 Hide Apps Without Deleting Them

A great deal of phone clutter is apps you never chose — games, shopping apps, things that came pre-installed. You do not have to delete them (and some cannot be deleted); you can simply tuck them away so they stop crowding the screen.

- iPhone: "Remove from Home Screen" keeps the app in the App Library but off your clean screen.
- iPhone: you can also hide whole pages of apps — press and hold the screen, tap the dots at the bottom, and untick a page.
- Android: long-press an app and choose Remove (from the home screen) rather than Uninstall.
- Android: many phones let you hide apps from the app drawer in the home-screen settings.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> Removing from the home screen and deleting are two different things. Removing just tidies your view; the app is still there if you ever want it. Deleting (uninstalling) actually removes it. For tidying, always choose remove, not delete.

7 Put Favorite People One Tap Away

The thing most people use a phone for is reaching a few specific people. You can put a button for a person — not just an app — right on the home screen, so one tap calls or texts your daughter, your doctor, or your neighbor.

- iPhone: add a Contacts or Phone Favorites widget to the home screen for one-tap calling.
- Android: many home screens let you add a "direct dial" or contact shortcut for a person.
- A photo of the person on the button makes it instantly recognizable at a glance.
- There is a whole companion guide, "One-Touch Calling for the People Who Matter," if you want this in depth.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A button with a loved one's face on it turns the phone from a maze into a direct line to the people you care about — which is, after all, the whole point of having one in the first place.

8 Add a Clock and Weather at a Glance

Widgets are big panels that sit on the home screen and show information without opening anything — the time, the day, the weather, your next appointment. A couple of well-chosen widgets make the phone genuinely useful the moment you look at it.

1. iPhone: press and hold the screen, tap the plus (+) at the top, and choose a Clock or Weather widget in a large size.

2. Android: press and hold the screen, tap Widgets, and drag a large Clock or Weather widget onto the screen.
3. Place them at the top where your eyes land first.
4. Choose the largest size so the numbers and temperature are easy to read.

> **TIP**
> A big clock-and-weather widget at the top of the home screen means you get the time, date, and today's weather every time you glance at the phone — no tapping, no hunting. It is one of the nicest small comforts you can add.

9 Consider a Launcher App on Android

If your Android phone's built-in easy mode is still not simple enough, a "launcher" app can replace the whole home screen with very large, high-contrast buttons designed specifically for older users. These are free or inexpensive and fully reversible.

- A senior launcher shows a few enormous buttons: Phone, Messages, Camera, Contacts.
- Many add an SOS button and show the time and weather in large type.
- It does not change the phone underneath — it just gives it a simpler face.
- You can switch back to the normal home screen at any time.

> **WATCH OUT**
> There are good senior-launcher apps and there are junky, ad-filled ones. Picking a reputable one and setting it as the default without locking yourself out takes a careful hand — I am glad to recommend and set up a trustworthy one for you rather than leave it to chance.

10 Make the Keyboard Easier

A cramped keyboard is one of the most frustrating parts of a phone, and it is very fixable. Bigger keys and a few helpers make typing far less of a chore.

- Easy mode makes the keyboard bigger automatically; otherwise raise the overall text size.
- Turn on key "popup" previews so you can see each letter as you press it.
- Use voice typing — tap the little microphone and just speak (there is a whole guide on this).
- Some phones offer a larger or one-handed keyboard layout in the keyboard settings.

> **TIP**
>
> If typing is a struggle, voice typing changes everything — you tap the microphone and talk, and the phone writes it down. For many people it becomes the main way they send messages, far easier than hunting for keys.

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11 Calm the Notifications

A phone that constantly buzzes and pings with alerts from games, shopping, and news feels chaotic and makes people anxious. Silencing the noise is one of the most relaxing things you can do to a phone.

1. Open Settings, then Notifications.
2. Go through the list and turn off notifications for games, shopping apps, and social media.
3. Keep notifications on for the things that matter — Phone, Messages, and perhaps a calendar.
4. Consider turning off the little red number badges too, so the screen looks calm.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keeping pings only for real people — calls and messages — and silencing everything else means the phone only interrupts you when a person wants you, not when a game wants your attention. That one change makes a phone feel peaceful.

12 Lock It In So It Stays Simple

Once the phone is simple, a couple of settings keep it that way, so a stray tap or a software update does not quietly undo your careful work.

- Turn off "automatically add new apps to the home screen" if your phone offers it, so downloads do not clutter the clean screen.
- Take a photo of the finished home screen, so it is easy to put back if it ever gets rearranged.
- Let me note the setup for you, so I can restore it quickly if needed.
- After any big update, glance at the screen to make sure nothing crept back.

GOOD TO KNOW

A big software update occasionally shuffles the home screen or turns off easy mode. If your simple phone ever looks complicated again out of nowhere, an update is the usual culprit — and it is a two-minute fix to set it back the way you like.

13 Setting It Up for a Parent

If you are setting this up for a parent rather than yourself, resist the urge to design it the way you would want it. The best simple phone fits the person who uses it, not the person who set it up.

- Ask which people and which tasks they actually use — build around those, not what you imagine.
- Use their words on any labels, not technical names.
- Make the buttons as big as they like, even if it looks oversized to you.

- Set it up together so they learn it, rather than handing back a finished mystery.

> **WATCH OUT**
> A phone someone helped set up but never understood is just a prettier maze. The goal is confidence, so whoever will use the phone should do the tapping while you (or I) guide them — that is how it actually sticks and stops the daily calls for help.

14 Keep It Simple Over Time

A simple phone can slowly fill back up as apps get installed and settings drift. A quick habit keeps it calm for good, with no big cleanups needed later.

- Every month or so, glance at the home screen and move any new clutter to the back page.
- Resist installing apps you do not need — most things can be done in the few you already have.
- If an app nags you to turn its notifications back on, say no.
- Keep that photo of the ideal layout handy to compare against.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> The phone will always try to drift back toward busy, because that is how it is designed and sold. A two-minute tidy now and then keeps your calm, simple phone exactly the way you want it.

15 When to Call Bill

Simplifying a phone is deeply worthwhile and very doable, but it is also the kind of task where an hour with someone beside you turns a fiddly afternoon into a phone you genuinely love. I set it up with you, not for you, so you leave knowing how it all works.

I will find out the handful of things you actually use, build a clean home screen around them with big labeled buttons and your favorite people one tap away, add a

clock-and-weather widget, turn on easy mode or a good launcher if it suits you, calm the notifications, and lock it so it stays simple. And I will leave you a photo of the finished screen.

- You want a clean, simple phone built around the few things you use.
- You would like a trustworthy senior launcher chosen and set up on Android.
- You are setting up a phone for a parent and want it right and reversible.
- Your simple setup got scrambled by an update and you want it restored.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Decide your few essential apps first, then make the screen about just those.

I want to...	Do this...
Turn on easy mode (Android)	Settings Display Easy mode (search "easy" if hidden)
Clean the iPhone screen	Hold the screen, drag unused apps away; keep six big essentials up top
Hide an app without deleting	iPhone: Remove from Home Screen (stays in App Library)
Bigger labeled buttons	Use larger app icons and raise the text size in Accessibility
A loved one, one tap away	Add a contact or Favorites shortcut to the home screen
Quiet the pings	Settings Notifications turn off games, shopping, social
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

HOW I CAN HELP

Your Visit — and My Promise

You don't have to remember all of it — just that a friendly, patient person is one call away, whenever you'd rather have a hand.

KEY SPECS

In your home — $99 flat for the first visit, no contracts and no surprises, with a 30-day come-back-free follow-up. In-home visits cover Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities.
Outside the area? Remotely — $49 for a screen-share session (free for Support Plan members, $39/mo), refundable if I can't fix it — and credited toward a visit if you'd rather have me in person. Book either at billshometech.com/book.

GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

Whenever you're ready, I'll come to your home anywhere in Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities, at your pace. Too far for a house call? I also help remotely. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042. — Bill

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